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BACKSTAIRS AT THE WHITE HOUSE
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EXCERPTED

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Donald Regan has settled into his job as the new White House chief of staff and the only thing that plagues him, he says, is "time."

"I don't have as much time to get as much done as I would like. There are so many problems and they must be handled quickly."

Regan was chairman of the board of Merrill Lynch before becoming treasury secretary. He appears to relish his new job at the White House and runs a tight ship. From the moment he arrived on the scene, he let everyone know who was boss.

He puts in a 12-hour day, handles the president's scheduling, sees the president every morning at 9 a.m., handles the enormous flow of paperwork, stands by the president during many of his appointments, and hits the social circuit at night, going to fund-raisers, receptions and dinners.

Asked how his wife likes his new schedule, Regan grinned and said, "Not much."

When he goes home at night, he likes to read and listen to semiclassical music. He also is a golfer and spent Easter weekend at the Augusta (Ga.) Golf Club with Secretary of State George Shultz, who is a member.

Regan is sympathetic with CIA Director William Casey, who wants his salary raised to Cabinet-level, around \$86,000 a year, from around \$75,000.

Regan says that since Casey has Cabinet-level rank, he should have the higher salary, but he adds that it is not in the 1986 budget.

Both Regan and Casey are multimillionaires who had to put their vast stock holdings in a blind trust.

Regan helped mastermind the budget cuts, including the elimination of 17 programs such as Amtrak, revenue sharing and the Small Business Administration, and has an argument in favor of all the cuts.

He says Amtrak subsidizes every passenger \$35 and when he took his daily commuter rides to Wall Street from the wealthy suburbs of New York, he did not need the government helping to pay the bill. It is understood that he also believes that Amtrak passengers can take buses or private transportation or planes that are now deregulated.

As for revenue sharing, he believes "there is nothing to share" since the government has to borrow to give to the states.

Whether those arguments will prevail remains to be seen. Congress may have a different idea on what is necessary for the general welfare and what is not.